

## Environmental Efforts Result in Opening an Oyster Growing Area for the First Time in Decades

**F**or the first time since the 1970s, the State Health Officer opened Area VI, an area north of Fowl River in Mobile Bay, to oystering. This is a natural oyster reef, but water quality issues in the past meant oysters from this area were unsafe for consumption.

This area remained open for only two weeks, Oct. 22 through Nov. 7, and like others, will be open less often and close sooner than other oystering areas in Mobile Bay due to its close proximity to the northern part of Mobile Bay.

Concerns in the past were about bacteria, mainly related to septic systems and waste water treatment plant outfalls. But over time, the entire land area adjacent to Area VI has been connected to sanitary sewer and the only sewer outfall in Area VI has been moved to a new plant located in north Mobile. This information was gathered by the ADPH-Seafood Branch while conducting a required sanitary survey of the area to be reclassified, using the department's state boat and vehicle.

The ADPH – Seafood Branch of the Food, Milk and Lodging Division is mandated by the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to follow specific guidelines when classifying a shellfish growing area. The Seafood Branch worked with the Department of Conservation – Marine Resources Division (MRD) and the FDA for more than a year and conducted more than 30 water quality samples from each of four stations.

The NSSP requires at least 30 samples per station. During the sample collection period, there were 148 samples collected for an above average total of 37 samples per station. Greg Dunn and Byron Webb of the Seafood Branch collected many of these samples under adverse weather conditions.

After ADPH compiled all of the data into a Growing Area Report, it was submitted to the FDA for review to determine if the area met all of the requirements. The FDA concurred with the department recommendation to classify Area VI as “conditionally restricted.” On April 10, Dr. Donald



**Oyster harvesters take advantage of the newly opened reef in North Mobile County.**



**An average of 37 water quality samples were collected from each of four stations and tested by the Mobile Division of the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories.**

Williamson signed the approval letter and the “Opening Order.” The MRD would determine the exact date and times the reef would open and close.

**continued page 4**

# Infant Mortality Rate in Alabama Falls to an All-time Low in 2011

The infant mortality rate of 8.1 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011 is the lowest ever recorded in Alabama. This represents 481 infants, the lowest number ever -- which died before reaching 1 year of age.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "Historically, Alabama's infant mortality rate has been among the highest in the nation and we must continue to address this challenging public health issue. Positive trends we are seeing include fewer teenage pregnancies and less smoking among pregnant women, and we hope to sustain these improvements in the coming years."

"Lowering Alabama's infant mortality rate is a critical part of our efforts to improve public health in Alabama," Gov. Robert Bentley said. "We are encouraged by news that our rate is the lowest it has ever been, and we will work to continue our progress."

Several other indicators of record progress are found in this year's statistics, especially with regard to teen births. The percentage of births to teenagers in 2011 was 11.3 (6,697), the lowest ever recorded. Another record low was the percent of births to young teens, defined as less than 18 years old, which fell to 3.5 percent of live births, (2,076 births).

The percentage of teenage mothers who smoked (10.8) and the percent of older mothers who smoked (10.6) are the lowest in the past decade. Mothers who smoke have a 20 percent higher infant mortality rate than nonsmoking mothers.

Accompanying the decrease in teen births has been a decline in the number of teen abortions from 1,644 in 2009, to 1,466 in 2010, and 1,318 in 2011.

A number of risk factors affect birth outcomes. Abstinence and family planning allow for delayed childbirth including appropriate spacing between births. Infant mortality was higher for mothers with birth intervals less than two years (8.5) versus those with a two-or-more-year interval (6.8) between births.

Reducing the number of preterm births can reduce costs for neonatal intensive care. Low birth weight infants, defined as those weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces, are about 20 times more likely to die than infants of normal weight.

The percentage of mothers with adequate prenatal care was similar for both blacks and whites in 2011. While 73.0 percent of all white women had adequate care, 69.4 percent of black women had adequate care. Over the past 12 years the percentage of mothers whose deliveries are paid for by Medicaid has grown from 45 to 53 percent.

Despite progress that marks the lowest infant mortality rates ever recorded among both black and white mothers in Alabama, disparities remain in pregnancy outcomes.

- The 2011 infant mortality rate for black infants of 13.0 per 1,000 live births was above the 2010 national rate for blacks of 11.6.
- Alabama's 2011 white infant mortality rate of 6.1 continues to be above the national rate of 5.2 for whites in 2010.

"To sustain our advances, we are considering strategies such as initiatives to reduce the number of preterm births," Dr. Williamson said. "We also need to limit elective deliveries when gestation is less than 39 weeks."

Graphs and detailed charts are available at [www.adph.org/healthstats](http://www.adph.org/healthstats).

## Alabama Department of Public Health

### Mission

To serve the people of Alabama by assuring conditions in which they can be healthy.

### Value Statement

The purpose of the Alabama Department of Public Health is to provide caring, high quality and professional services for the improvement and protection of the public's health through disease prevention and the assurance of public health services to resident and transient populations of the state regardless of social circumstances or the ability to pay.

The Department of Public Health works closely with the community to preserve and protect the public's health and to provide caring quality services.

## Alabama's Health

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# New Physical Fitness Assessment Underway in Alabama Schools

Every Alabama student enrolled in physical education from grades 2-12 is participating in a new Alabama Physical Fitness Assessment (APFA) this school year, an assessment which replaces the President's Challenge Fitness Test that had been adopted almost 30 years ago.

The assessment focuses on health-related fitness by assessing health and physical fitness and targets achieving and maintaining a healthy level of fitness. Numerous organizations have recommended increased physical activity due to the epidemic trend in overweight children and adolescents. Alabama ranks in the bottom 10 percent when activity profiles of Alabama youth are compared to those of other states.

"The good news is that with appropriate physical activity, students can improve their level of fitness to reduce their risk," said Laurie Eldridge-Auffant, public health education manager with the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division. "The goal is for students to fall into the 'Healthy Fitness Zone' for good health and physical fitness benefits or the 'High Fitness Zone' for even greater benefits."

The new assessment better allows physical education teachers to monitor and assist students in improving overall health, identify strengths and weaknesses, improve communication between students and parents about fitness status, and generate data for tracking student health-related fitness at the school, district, and state levels.

The program was developed by the Quality Physical Education Task Force through a partnership between the State Department of Education and the Alabama Department of Public Health and funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The assessment is aimed toward identifying strengths and weaknesses, as well as monitoring and assisting students in improving overall health and fitness. All students in grades 2-12 were tested between Oct. 1 and Nov. 1, 2012, and will be tested again between March 1 and May 1, 2013.

The APFA measures four areas of health-related physical fitness:

1. Aerobic cardiovascular endurance.
2. Muscular strength and endurance.
3. Abdominal strength and endurance.
4. Flexibility.

Students are being assessed in each component area and classified into a specific health-related fitness zone. The health-related fitness zones are separated into three levels:

- Needs Improvement Zone (N),
- Healthy Fitness Zone (H), and
- High Fitness Zone (HFZ).

If a student's results fall into the Needs Improvement category, it indicates he or she could be at risk for potential health-related problems.

Data collected is kept private and treated as confidential information. However, both parents and students will receive assessment results. The new assessment was developed to be inclusive of all students. Assessment modifications may be made by physical education teachers to accommodate students with special needs or students with medical concerns.

For more information, contact Laurie Eldridge-Auffant at (334) 206-5651 or e-mail Laurie.Eldridge-Auffant@adph.state.al.us.



**The Alabama State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance presented the Angie Nazaretian Lay Leader Award to the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division for being a supporter and collaborator for health and physical education programs across the state. Shown are Nancy Ray, left, of the State Department of Education and Laurie Eldridge-Auffant, right, who accepted the award on behalf of the division for the work done as part of the Quality Physical Education project.**

## Environmental Efforts, continued from page 1

Many of the public oyster reefs in Mobile Bay have been closed because of a combination of predator oyster drills, damage from storms, and more than a century of year round harvest. The state has taken a more active role in management of the reefs to give them a chance to rebuild. Instead of opening all the reefs in the state at once, as of last year, reefs were opened one at a time. After a few weeks of harvest, a reef is closed until the following year, giving the oysters a chance to reproduce and grow without disturbance.

Over the past 100 years, Mobile Bay has lost more than 100,000 acres of oyster habitat. Once thriving reefs around Point Clear now are long gone. Scientists say those lost

oyster reefs would go a long way toward improving water quality in Mobile Bay if they were restored.

Among those who helped make this project possible are State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson; director of the Bureau of Environmental Services Pres Allinder; director of the Food, Milk and Lodging Division, Ronald Dawsey; Bureau of Clinical Laboratories – Mobile Division, Manager Carol Dorsey; ADPH Seafood Branch Greg Dunn, Byron Webb, Jeff McCool; Department of Conservation Marine Resources Division Director Chris Blankenship, Major Scott Bannan; Biologist John Mareska; Jason Herrmann and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s Regional Shellfish Specialist David Wiggins.

## ADPH.org Debuts New Look, Improved Functionality

For the first time since 2006, the Alabama Department of Public Health’s website, ADPH.org, has a new look.

For Jennifer Sumner, acting director of the ADPH Digital Media Branch, the challenge of redesigning the site was to give it a fresh, new face without losing the functionality and accessibility that its users had grown familiar with.

For the home page, meeting that challenge meant coming up with a streamlined look that retains features like the A-Z Index and the ADPH Portal Log In while adding improved access to news releases, notices, events and webcasts. Also, the page can now accommodate more than one banner at the top, as refreshing the page reveals a rotating set of graphics that highlight different programs or initiatives each month.

For individual program pages, the facelift included the removal of the three side images previously featured on every page. Those pages have also been widened, and new graphics for the headers and footers are being designed and implemented each week. The result is a clean, open look that is more reader friendly and provides more room for the programs to add information.

The addition of a Share button, which allows users to print, email or share pages through a variety of social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter, furthers the Digital Media Branch’s goal of improving the timeliness of information sharing from the website, as well as increasing the frequency of messages delivered to the public.

The ADPH website was redeveloped in 2006 using a new content management system that allows individuals with no prior experience in programming or web publishing

to easily maintain web pages. ADPH program directors and area administrators assign web editors to work with the Digital Media Branch to keep websites up-to-date and accurate. This system also enables the Digital Media Branch to ensure that the ADPH website meets the web accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In addition to maintaining ADPH.org, the Digital Media Branch handles the department’s presence on the social media networks Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Wikipedia. In the past six years, the number of annual pages views on ADPH.org has increased from 2.8 million to over 22 million.

*By Blu Gilliland*



**Blu Gilliland and Jennifer Sumner are shown.**

## PRAMS Data Show Statistically Significant Increase in Breastfeeding

PRAMS, the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, is a project funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in order to help understand why some babies are born healthy and others are not. Approximately, 1,100 Alabama women are randomly selected to receive a questionnaire, which asks new mothers questions about their behaviors and experiences around the time of their pregnancy. An important topic covered by the PRAMS questionnaire is breastfeeding. In 2010, in Alabama:

- 70.6 percent of mothers reported that they initiated breastfeeding.
- Comparing 2001 and 2010 data, there has been a statistically significant increase of 30.3 percent in mothers who initiated breastfeeding.
- Characteristics of moms who are most likely to breastfeed include: older, white, higher educated, married moms whose delivery was not paid for by Medicaid, who had normal birth weight babies.
- Only 23.6 percent of mothers were still breastfeeding two to six months after delivery.

- 29.7 percent of mothers did not attempt to breastfeed their babies.

PRAMS data indicated that 94.5 percent of hospitals provided breastfeeding information to mothers. One mother replied to the survey as follows: "I would like to advise young mothers to breastfeed more. My baby turned out so much smarter than average."

For more information about PRAMS, call Izza Cagle, (334) 206-2700 or visit [adph.org/healthstats/](http://adph.org/healthstats/).

Mother's Rooms are available on the 12th and 13th floors of the RSA Tower for breastfeeding moms returning to work. The rooms are private and provide a relaxing place for mothers to express breastmilk.

For more information, contact State Lactation Coordinator Michell Grainger, MSN, RNC, IBCLC, WIC Program, (334) 206-2921.

## Expanded Radiological Emergency Response Teams Train To Respond to an Industrial Accident

Industrial accidents, fires and weather-related incidents can occur that involve the use or transportation of radioactive material in Alabama. Radioactive material can also be used by terrorists. Expanded Radiological Emergency Response Team (ERERT) members play a vital role in protecting the public during any emergency which involves radioactive material within the state.

To help prepare local teams, the Office of Radiation Control (ORC) conducted a hands-on training titled "An Industrial Accident," which involved a fixed nuclear gauge Oct. 24 in Montgomery. The purpose of this training was to provide instruction to designated environmentalists and nurses throughout the state who most likely would be the first to the scene agents to provide the State Health Officer or his designee with an initial assessment of the radiological conditions and to provide initial assistance in the resolution of radiological hazards with incident commanders, such as local emergency management agencies, law enforcement and plant managers who are radioactive material licensees with the ORC.

Responsibilities may include providing care for the injured, establishing a restricted area boundary, monitoring for radiation contamination, and possibly conducting a field swipe test for contamination during a response. ERERT

members are expected to follow guidance from the ORC in order to protect themselves and others.

This was a joint training event with the Center for Emergency Preparedness.



**Members of the Public Health Area 10 ERERT team participated in the exercise. Nurse Ann Lannon attends Roger Cleckler as Keith Hicks conducts a radiological survey of area. Myron Riley (at rear) of the Office of Radiation Control is instrument operator and controller.**

## Alabama Asthma Program Logic Model Featured in Textbook

The Alabama Asthma Program is among the action profiles selected to illustrate logic models in the newly released textbook, *The Logic Model Guidebook: Better Strategies for Great Results* by Lisa Wyatt Knowlton and Cynthia C. Phillips. Logic models are used by managers and evaluators to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of a program.

The logic model, led by the department and co-created with the Alabama Asthma Coalition, public health officials and stakeholders, built a five-year strategic plan to affect asthma. Debra Hodges, Ph.D., Research Unit Director in the Injury Prevention Branch, said, "This plan was the basis for an overarching and generic model that guided many committees to author committee models with specific activities and outcomes."

A model printed in the book identifies inputs, outputs and outcomes. It uses the actual program to familiarize the reader with the practice of logic modeling. Assumptions and external factors are also listed in boxes.

To illustrate how a logic model is used and train coalition members at an early meeting, Dr. Hodges used an example of a family picnic and asked members what they wanted the ultimate outcome of the picnic to be and the ways they could reach their short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes. Ideas were solicited, written down, taped on a wall, and then photographed to create the model.

This textbook, recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is being used in all states and at the graduate school level.

## Public Can Access Information on Healthcare-associated Infections in Alabama Hospitals

Alabamians now have access to information on healthcare-associated infections as reported by the state's hospitals. The report provides hospital-specific infection data for several types of infections and can be found at [www.adph.org/hai](http://www.adph.org/hai).

"The law requiring hospital infection reporting was passed in 2009 with cooperation from Alabama's hospitals, ADPH, and the state's legislature, most notably its sponsor, retired Sen. Bobby Denton," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. "Since that time we have worked with our advisory council comprised of hospital executives, infection practitioners, physicians, business leaders and other key stakeholders to develop a program that will provide good information to consumers and will allow providers to have comparisons for benchmarking. I am proud of the work and know it will be helpful in continuing to decrease the rate of healthcare-associated infections in our state."

Dr. Williamson added that the report should not take the place of discussions between patients and their physicians when choosing a hospital. "While this report is important and helpful, it should not be used as the sole factor in the selection of a hospital."

"Our advisory council suggested we begin the infection reporting program with categories of infections reported from certain units in the hospital," said Dr. Williamson. "The categories included: surgical site infections of the colon and abdomen, catheter-associated urinary tract infections,

and central line-associated blood stream infections. We believe these provide a good base for our program and cover infections that are important to good patient care."

Keith Granger, CEO of Trinity Medical Center and chairman of the Alabama Hospital Association's Quality Task Force, expressed support for the legislation, stating that hospital leaders were pleased to have been a part of this important work and remain committed to a strong infection prevention program.

"Our first report is very positive," added Dr. Williamson. "When compared to the rest of the nation, Alabama's hospitals performed better than the national average on three of the four categories reported and similar to the national average on the other. We congratulate hospitals' infection practitioners for their diligence in combatting the spread of infection and providing a safe environment for patient care."

Granger added that hospital leaders understand that their work on infection prevention will never be complete and emphasized that hospitals are on a continual journey to provide better care. A new website has been designed to provide healthcare consumers with information on how they can get more involved in their own care. The site is [www.jointhehealthjourney.com](http://www.jointhehealthjourney.com) and it provides links to this infection report, as well as other sources for Alabama-specific hospital data. It also has a glossary of healthcare terminology, suggested information to discuss with your doctor and many other helpful resources.

## Co-workers Witness Home Health Nurse Karen Osborne in Action

*Sandra Owens, LCSW, PIP, Area 5 Home Health Social Work Manager for Etowah, Calhoun, St. Clair, Blount, Cherokee, DeKalb and Shelby counties relayed the following story about a recent encounter in which Karen Osborne came to the aid of a stranger.*

**A**t a recent health fair, the Alabama Department of Public Health had a booth representing Etowah County Home Health. During the health fair one of the seniors became dizzy and had to sit down.

Our home health nurse, Karen Osborne, R.N., approached the lady and asked if she would like for her to check her blood pressure. The senior agreed for it to be checked. Mrs. Osborne acted in a very professional manner by asking about her health history, medications and symptoms. Upon taking her blood pressure the RN found the heart rhythm to be very erratic. Ms. Osborne talked with the patient in a calm manner and the senior agreed for the rescue squad to be contacted.

Ms. Osborne stayed by the patient and helped keep her calm until the paramedics' arrival. She provided them with information. They checked her and determined that the woman needed to be taken to the emergency room.

This may have saved this woman's life. I was very impressed at how the nurse handled herself and at the same time took care of the lady and the curious onlookers.

I asked her afterwards if she was curious about the outcome. She said that it is common, in an emergency, for a nurse to help someone and send them on to the hospital or doctor without ever knowing the outcome - that it's part of the job, knowing that you did the best you could and then placing it in another professional's hands.

It takes a special person to be a nurse and in my opinion, an even more special nurse to serve the citizens, of our communities, by representing the Alabama Department of Public Health.

## NASA Awards Public Achievement Medal to Mobile's Dr. Bert Eichold

*Reprinted from the Mobile Press Register, September 6, 2012*

**M**OBILE, Alabama -- After nearly a decade serving as a mentor to college interns studying earth science, Mobile's Dr. Bernard H. Eichold was awarded NASA's Exceptional Public Achievement Medal last week.

Because of the storm, he was unable to attend a ceremony held Aug. 28 at NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va. to honor those who've made contributions to the program.

Eichold, who has led the Mobile County Health Department for 20 years, has been a mentor and scientific advisor for one of NASA's earth science programs, known as DEVELOP, since 2003. He received the honor for his work engaging college students as they use information about the planet for community education, officials said.

"It's an opportunity to advance remote sensing and apply it to community health and various projects," Eichold said. The term remote sensing is commonly used to describe the science of identifying, observing and measuring an object without coming into direct contact with it.

The process, according to data from NASA, involves detecting and measuring radiation of different wavelengths

reflected or emitted from distant objects or materials, by which they may be identified and categorized by class, substance and spatial distribution.

Some accomplishments of remote sensing from NASA include the first global weather satellite system, an increased understanding of earthquakes as well as the development of advanced climate studies.



**Dr. Eichold**

About 10 years ago, Eichold learned about the earth sciences program during a presentation at a policy conference. He established the third national location for the student internship program at the Mobile County Health Department in the fall of 2003.

There are now 12 such sites across the U.S. Eichold said Mobile's program is the only one in Alabama. "It's been good," Eichold said. "We've advanced science and advanced learning."

*By Casandra Andrews*

## News Conference Promotes Teen Driving Safety



Supporters of a greater awareness of Alabama's graduated driver's license law and other measures to promote teen driving safety gathered at a news conference Sept. 27. Facts, figures, specifics on the three stages of the graduated license, and other information on teen driving safety are available at [adph.org/teendriving/](http://adph.org/teendriving/).

## Race for Nace



ADPH staff "Raced for Nace" in Montgomery's annual Turkey Burner 5K on Nov. 17. Francis "Nace" Taylor was an employee in the Bureau of Information Technology and the husband of fellow employee Takenya Taylor, who works in the Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease. Nace Taylor recently lost his battle to brain cancer and staff raced in memory of him. Shown are Danny Doyle, Sondra Reese, Amanda Martin and Takenya Taylor. Not pictured is Jora White.

## Retirees

### October

**Mary Ann Armstrong**

Home & Community Services

**Mary Farshee**

Children's Health Insurance Program

**Terry Henson**

Morgan County Health Department

**Annette Ledford**

Talladega County Health Department

**Willie Lias**

Barbour County Health Department

**Barbara McCormick**

Chilton County Health Department

**Susan Pierce**

Marshall County Health Department

**Mary Joan Greene**

HIV/AIDS

## Commendations

If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee's supervisor and a copy by e-mail to [arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us](mailto:arrol.sheehan@adph.state.al.us) for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee's name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

**Patsy Beasley**

Financial Services

from Charles Woernle, M.D.

Montgomery, Ala.

**Janice Broaden**

Montgomery County Health

Department

from Evoynne Branche

Montgomery, Ala.

**Adrian Casey**

DeKalb County Health Department

from William B. Waterhouse

Fort Payne, Ala.

**Gloria Culbrick**

Sumter County Health Department

from Joy Robinson

Birmingham, Ala.

**Kathie Peters**

Center for Health Statistics

from Caroline Conseibo

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Africa

# Russell County Health Department 'Bra-Dazzles' to Help Patients with Breast Cancer

During October, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, community partners in Russell County had many events planned to raise awareness and funds. The employees at the Russell County Health Department wanted to do something to help underserved women with breast cancer.

One of the fundraisers sponsored by East Alabama Medical Center in Lee County was called "Bra-Dazzle," a bra decorating contest for breast care awareness, and the employees of RCHD decided to enter their own creation.

Public Health Nurse Dell Corley explained that they first brainstormed about how their entry would look, with three other staff members (PHN Maribeth Johnson, PHN Regina Mitchell and PHSW Geli Windham) participating, they took the bra home for one night, decorated it, and brought it back the next day to pass on to the next artist to render their work. The bra was completed in just four days!

"We wanted to get involved in this because we see so many patients with breast problems that are too young for the Cancer Detection Program or who do not have health insurance, or are underinsured," Mrs. Corley said.

She also mentioned that the breast health navigator at EAMC has been able to help patients even though they live in another county.

"I think we all were surprised at how well it came together, and how much fun we had doing it," she said. The staff members at Russell County Health Department are already planning their strategy for next year's entry.



**Shown with the finished bra are Geli Windham, Maribeth Johnson, R.N., and Dell Corley, R.N.**

## Kourtni Mitchell Runs for Breast Cancer Awareness



On Oct. 6, Nutrition Association Kourtni Mitchell of the Russell County Health Department ran in the Montgomery Half Marathon, Capital City 5K and Mayor's Mile. This event was a kickoff to Breast Cancer Awareness Month in the River Region. Proceeds go to help support the Joy of Life Foundation that benefits those who have won their fight with breast cancer, those that are still fighting, and to those who have lost their fight. During the run Ms. Mitchell wore a pink heart in honor of a coworker's friend who died as a result of breast cancer. Over 1,500 participants ran in this event.

## DeKalb County Staff 'Fight Like a Girl' for Breast Cancer



Employees of the DeKalb County Health Department donned custom-designed blue T-shirts to wear on Fridays and planted a "Tree of Hope" in the lobby again this year in observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Patients and staff placed ribbons on the tree for those who are fighters, survivors or are no longer with us.

# Pumpkin Carving and Costume Contests Draw Enthusiastic Crowds

Public health employees demonstrated their originality, creativity and style in the annual pumpkin decorating and costume contests in Montgomery on Oct. 31. In the competition sponsored by the Office of Human Resources, entrants intricately carved, dressed, decorated and labeled their pumpkins. A panel of judges selected “Spider and Crows” by Dr. Tom Miller as best carved. Judged best decorated and also voted most popular pumpkin based on monetary donations made was “Here Comes the Bride,” by Patrice Anderson. All proceeds benefited the State Combined Campaign.

The Nutrition and Physical Activity Division led those assembled in line dancing at the RSA Park before the costume contest began. Judges selected Anna Marie Parrish of the Video Communications Division, also known as “The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo,” as having the best individual costume. “The KIA Chippers” of the Children’s Health Insurance Program staff was judged as having the best group costume and crowd applause determined they were also the winners for the most popular costume.

Danny Doyle photos



**Patrice Anderson**



**Tom Miller, M.D.**



**Anna Marie Parrish**



**Kia Chippers**

## SOMH Launches Statewide LEP Program

The State Office of Minority Health (SOMH) is gearing up to launch the statewide Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Program. The program has a goal to provide language interpretation and translation services to patients who are non English proficient. Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides that no person shall “on the basis of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

The Alabama Department of Public Health has taken reasonable steps to ensure that LEP individuals have meaningful access to programs, services and benefits by informing and training staff, providing public information about the availability of free interpreter services, providing resources, and monitoring needs and outcomes.

The SOMH will be providing LEP trainings to assure that the following department policies are followed:

- Policy 03-18 – Provides that all employees of the department provide access to direct interpretation/translation services for clients who are limited English proficient. The policy also addresses the responsibilities of interpreters and translators as well as ethical and confidentiality requirements of interpreters.
- Policy 03-19 – Prohibits the discrimination against all individuals with LEP, based upon their national origin and requires the provision of language assistance services at no cost to clients with LEP. The policy also addresses the collection of data, the provision of client information, notification of rights, confidentiality, and availability of language services to all individuals with LEP regardless of the size of the individual’s language group in the community.
- Policy 06-02 – Mandates the collection of data on a client’s race, ethnicity, and spoken and written language(s) during the client’s encounter, and the reporting of such information. The policy also provides instruction on how to designate race and ethnicity.

For more information on the State LEP plan, please contact Elana M. Parker Merriweather in the Office of Minority Health at (334)206-7980.

## ASU Honors Drew Nelson

Alabama State University presented one of two 2012 Keepers of the Community Spirit Award to Drew Nelson, director of policy and marketing research of the Communications and Marketing Division. In accepting the award, Nelson said he is motivated by ASU’s commitment to its neighbors. Nelson said ADPH and the university have partnered in events to promote health conscious programming to ASU by conducting focus groups and working with the College of Health Sciences. Efforts in which he has been involved include a Women’s Health Symposium, the first Men’s Health Symposium and a Teen Texting and Driving Workshop. Nelson was called “a familiar face” at ASU community events including conferences, games and other occasions such as the funeral of civil rights icon and ASU alumna Thelma Glass. He was selected by a committee of eight individuals, internal and external to ASU. Nelson received the award at a business and community breakfast Nov. 20 at the Renaissance in Montgomery.

## Annual Report Wins National Recognition

Congratulations to editor Takenya Taylor and graphic designer Danny Doyle of the Communications and Health Marketing Division on being awarded a bronze medal in the National Public Health Information Coalition Excellence in Public Health Communication program. The award was presented for the department’s 2011 Annual Report. A record number of entries (321 in 2012 versus 230 in 2011) were made in the annual awards competition. The results were announced Oct. 2 at the coalition’s annual symposium in Washington, D.C.



Karl Bryant photo





# Calendar of Events

 <p><b>January 3</b> ADPH Statewide Staff Meeting, 3-4 p.m. For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.</p>	 <p><b>January 9</b> Home Health, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 206-3867.</p>	 <p><b>January 10</b> Strengthening Families and the Help Me Grow Program, 10-11:30 a.m. For more information contact Dawn Ellis, (334) 206-2965.</p>	
 <p><b>January 15</b> Protecting Our Children: Recognizing Child Abuse, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. For more information contact Katherine Hert, (334) 206-7063.</p>	 <p><b>January 16</b> Healthcare Issues in the Hispanic and Latino Communities, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Elana Parker Merriweather, (334) 206-7980.</p>	 <p><b>January 17</b> Scale Back Alabama 2013 Kickoff Event, 10-10:30 a.m. For more information contact Mim Gaines, (334) 206-5649.</p>	
 <p><b>January 22</b> ADPH Million Hearts Campaign 2013, noon-1 p.m. For more information contact Melanie Rightmyer, (334) 206-3977.</p>	 <p><b>January 31</b> Alabama Public Health Training Center, 10-11:30 a.m. For more information contact Video Communications, (334) 206-5618.</p>	 <p><b>February 6</b> Million Hearts and Heart Health, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Melanie Rightmyer, (334) 206-3977.</p>	
 <p><b>February 13</b> Home Health, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 206-3867.</p>	 <p><b>March 13</b> Home Health, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Becky Leavins, (334) 206-3867.</p>	 <p><b>March 20</b> Diabetes, 2-4 p.m. For more information contact Debra Griffin, (334) 206-2066.</p>	<p><b>April 3-5</b> Alabama Public Health Association Educational Conference, Birmingham. For more information visit <a href="http://www.alaphassoc.org">www.alaphassoc.org</a></p>